

**Classroom Management: Knowing Students' Interest To Involve Them**



***Department of English and Humanities (ENH)***

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**An Internship Report Submitted Fulfillment of the Requirements for Degree  
of Bachelor of Arts in English**

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction:

When I finally got the permission to work as an intern English teacher in an English medium school named Cherry Blossoms International School, I thought teaching is just a simple thing like the other things I do every day. I thought I will prepare the lesson plans with interesting drill and will follow it in the class as I did during peer teaching sessions in my university. But surprisingly I discovered that only making the students practice the grammar items is not my job but it is the classroom management what I had to do first.

'Your most important job is perhaps to create the condition in which learning can take place,' that's what I read Jim Scrivener's book titled *Learning Teaching* in my theory classes but felt the weight of the words when I experienced how noisy and reluctant the students can be in studying.

So I recalled Scrivener, 'The skills of creating and managing a successful class may be the key to the whole success of a course. An important part of this is to do with your attitude, intentions and personality and your relationships with the learners. (Scrivener, 1994, p. 79) However, you also need certain organisational skills and techniques,' and dived into my job.

So I started searching for the options which can help me to make the students quiet so that they listen to me. However a good story helped me to come out of that class intact on the first day but it became a great headache for me. I kept thinking of finding new ideas of involving the students in the teaching and learning process.

To find new ideas I had to observe the students closely and the observation gave me a very good idea of the students. My labour however did not go in vain and finally when I left the school after three months of teaching, I found that the students love me a lot and they keenly listen to me.



The journey was not very easy. I always had to find out and tell what they want to listen and had to mix up the lessons with that to earn their faith. I had to make them believe that I always say and do the interesting things which caught their attention.



## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

In Jim Scrivener's book *Learning Teaching* (1994) Classroom management is defined as the methods and strategies an educator uses to maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to student success and learning (Scrivener 1994, p.79). Not only Scrivener but Penny Ur also talked about some rules or methods in her definition of classroom management.

Classroom discipline is a state in which both teacher and learners accept and consistently observe a set of rules about behaviour in the classroom whose function is to facilitate smooth and efficient teaching and learning in a lesson (Ur, 1996, p.270)

Megableh says that "Classroom management refers to the procedures and routine actions used by the teacher to maintain the classroom quiet and smooth, while classroom discipline refers to the procedure and strategies used by the teacher to deal with incorrect actions or behaviours conducted by the student (as cited in Brown, 2007, p.1).

#### 2.1. Challenges of classroom management and Techniques to overcome

Richard, Jack C. (1990) the author of the book *The Language Teaching Matrix* stated that "Classroom Management refers to the ways in which students' behavior, movement and interaction during a lesson are recognized and controlled by the teacher to enable teaching to take place most effectively

During my three months of teaching, there I have encountered many challenges, from learning a new school system, materials, and strategies to learning the structure and regimentation through my own personal experience. One thing that I have found to be the most challenging is finding my own individual teaching style and structure for classroom management.



All teachers dream of keeping their classrooms free from disruptions. To achieve this, they need to shape and correct learners' behaviour in loving and caring ways. Classroom settings can also help to inspire and maintain positive behaviour of the students. The terms classroom 'discipline' and 'management' have been often considered as synonymous. Although discipline "is an instrument that moulds, shapes, corrects, and inspires appropriate behaviour, it is mistakenly associated with punitive procedures". Classroom management, on the other hand, includes "ways to effectively reduce misbehaviour in the classroom setting" (Victor, 2005, p. 7).

In particular, classroom management involves "all the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials so that instruction of content and student learning can take place" (Wong & Rosemary, 2001, p. 84). In addition, it "consists of practices and procedures that a teacher uses to maintain an environment in which instruction and learning can occur" (p. 10). This requires teachers to use organizing strategies, including things relevant to space, time, and materials so as for teaching and learning to occur.

Teachers most often see disruption, defiance, and inattention from the students in their classrooms. No wonder that only half of classroom time is spent on teaching and learning activities whilst the rest is wasted on classroom management (Geiger, 2000, p. 385). Well-managed classrooms show little confusion, disorder, and anti-social behavior. Effective teaching and learning cannot take place in contexts full of disruption. Discipline is, therefore, "necessary for proper character development, academic study, living with others, personal habits, [and] physical development of the body" (Victor, 2005, p. 12).

Penny Ur. In her book *A Course in Language Teaching* (1989) discussed different aspects of dealing problems related to classroom management and keeping discipline in class. She discussed the steps that needed to be taken before or after the problems arise. She suggested of three steps to be taken before the problem arises which she called the preventive strategies.



- a. **Analytical and Careful Planning:** When a lesson is clearly planned and organized there is likely to be a momentum and a feeling of purpose which retains students' attention on the task. Moreover, the momentum and the preparation for any kind of situation give the teacher the confidence to win the faith of the students.
- b. **Clear Instructions:** Problems sometimes arise due to students' uncertainty about what they are supposed to be doing. The necessary information needs to be communicated clearly and quickly, courteously but assertively: this is precisely what the task involves.
- c. **Keep in touch:** Teachers need to be constantly aware of what is going on in every areas of the classroom, keeping eyes and ears open. This achieves two things: firstly, students know you are aware of them all the time which encourages participation and personal contact in one hand and discourages deviant activity on the other; secondly, teacher becomes able to detect a student's incipient loss of interest or distraction and do something about it before it becomes problematic.

Areas to be cautious about according to Ur are:

- a. The best action is a quiet but clear response that stops the deviant activity, keeping the latter as low as possible. Over-assertive reactions can jeopardise students' curiosity and interest to the subject which a teacher always wishes to avoid.
- b. Inexperienced teachers of adolescents are often upset by the remarks that were not intended personally; a more difficult piece of advice for the teacher is even if he/she is quite sure about the criticism was meant personally, teacher should do his/her best to relate to it as if it was not: should not let the student pull to pull him or her in any personal conflict.
- c. Threats are often a sign of weakness; teachers should use the formula 'if you ... than ...' only as a real, factual option that he/she are ready to put into practice, not as a weapon to make an impression or intimidate.



## 2.2 Classroom Management Strategies

Classroom management strategies involve: (a) organizing, (b) teaching management, (c) teacher-student relationship, and (d) teacher sanctions/ reward (consequences) strategies (Shawer, 2006, p. 37). Some of these strategies are concerned with administrative rules, while others target actual classroom pedagogical activities.

Classroom organizing strategies guide teachers to use and develop behavioural classroom protocols, including arriving in and exiting classroom, seating students, turning in homework, and going to the restroom. Daily routine procedures, such as keeping supplies organized and handling paperwork, show the difference between well- and less-managed classrooms. In well-managed classrooms, teachers introduce 'transition' procedures that set out classroom protocols to students on day one. For example, teachers make clear what students should consider as the appropriate behaviour in classroom, when assigned work is complete (Canter, 1992, p. 19). Effective behaviour management is difficult to achieve through inhibiting disruptive behaviour. Rather, teachers can turn students voluntarily compliant by respecting and being considerate with them. Without training in various management strategies, teachers make the mistake of punishing rather than managing (Cangelosi, 2004, p. 9).

Effective classroom management also depends on the teaching quality, which teachers could achieve through using teaching management strategies. Effective classroom management occurs when teachers choose stimulating tasks that sustain interest. When pedagogy is boring, students cannot get positive or compliant. Therefore, teachers need to choose tasks which students genuinely need (relevance criterion of pedagogy). When teachers ignore students' needs, they cannot expect them to comply or attend to learning activities. Further, teachers must make tasks realistic, meaningful, manageable, and achievable (task suitability to student schemata). Asking students to approach tasks beyond their reach results in student objection and dissatisfaction, whereas easy tasks leave no option to students but side talking to pass the time (Shawer, Gilmore & Banks-Joseph, 2009, p. 23).



Choosing substantial pedagogical input gives students the feeling they learn new and useful things (content-substantiality). Trivial tasks fail to engage students in learning or keep them silent. Classroom management requires teachers to use activities that defuse attention-seeking behaviours, like group- and pair-work because these keep students busy working rather than side-talking. Moreover, addressing style and ability differences keeps learners engaged in learning through providing extra tasks and material to fill in the time gap between low- and high-ability and fast and slow students. This also allows teachers to fill in the time when having extra lesson time without things to do. In addition, teachers should always set and implement time-limits for activities to encourage students to seize the time for learning instead of disruption. It is also important that teachers look confident before students by knowing how to use apparatus and having clear understanding of lessons (Shawer, 2003, p. 16).

Learning styles are also keys to effective classroom management for driving students to prefer learning through certain modalities more than others (Victor, 2005, p. 7). 'Visual style' learners prefer to see language written in order to approach tasks at a degree of easiness. 'Auditory' learners need to listen to the language they learn, whereas 'kinaesthetic' students prefer to move around and handle things in the learning situation (Tomlinson, 1998, p. 14). Visual students are better disciplined through using eye contact and behaviour charts, auditory learners need information to be repeated back to them and making use of voice pitch, whereas tactual students need hands-on activities. Once students take in information through their preferred channel of learning, they rarely cause trouble (Victor, 2005, p. 19).

Learning styles could be grouped into 'organizers', 'researchers', 'relaters', and 'doers'. Organizers prefer to deal with learning enterprises in a logical order therefore disorganized tasks may stimulate their disruptive behaviour. Unlike Organizers, researchers question the rationales behind tasks. If their queries are not answered, this may trigger their disruptive behaviours (Victor, 2005, p. 13). Relaters who like interaction with others can be managed through creating a context that involves good relationships, fairness, personal interactions, approval, praise, and affirmation. Doers who like participating in hands-on



activities prefer guidelines to rules, opportunities to show leadership, and empowerment when being disciplined.

Academic procedures concern the management of classrooms through the quality of pedagogical input and strategies. Lesson planning is not only crucial to effective pedagogy but also to effective classroom management. Each lesson should reflect students' learning needs, by anticipating their performance and behaviour. This enables teachers to amend their lesson plans when they go wrong or when problems arise. For example, planning a lesson where students move around requires teachers to have clear ideas of how to move quickly and efficiently from one activity to another. Moreover, teachers need to always justify their pedagogical input to convince students to accept and actively participate in learning activities. To facilitate learning and keep order, teachers need to provide clear task instructions and be able to use resources. In small group discussions, teachers assign roles to group members, including leader, recorder, and timekeeper (Canter, 1992, p. 12).

Positive student-teacher relationships improve students' affective and cognitive development, increase motivation, and minimize anticipated negative behaviours (Bradley & Pauley, 2005, p. 21). Teacher-student relationship strategies assist teachers to establish and keep good relationships with students. Good class managers start firm and get relaxed later. Good classroom managers also defuse confrontations, keep calm, take the heat out of the situation, do not argue with students, and use students' names, humour, and constructive criticism.

Good classroom managers do not, use verbal reprimand, threats, embarrassing and taunting comments and they do not suspend, or expel students (Geiger, 2000, p. 14). It should be taken care of more in case of the adult learners as they are more conscious about their prestige. Moreover, when the school is a co-education institution, the boys and girls remain conscious about their own position in front of the opposite sex. "The teacher should act in a professional manner and always remember that he/she is... not a teenager" (Victor, 2005, p. 6). Even though the students are teenagers they like to be treated as adults.



The teachers must try to understand students' psychology as learners pass through different development stages, each with distinctive affective and cognitive implications. , Therefore, Effective communication is necessary to create contexts that foster mutual respect between students and teachers through active listening techniques, avoiding traditional communication roadblocks, and responding with empathy to student anxiety and frustration (Brown, 2005, p. 31).

Rewards given by the teachers also influence classroom management. Teachers should not box students into a corner, as this incurs confrontations and disruptive behaviour. They can use tangible rewards, their institution reward system, and their own system but rewards should always be visible. For example, praising good students in public, giving merit points, and displaying good work. If possible, teachers write down good students' names in the honouring list on class and school boards. Teachers should tactfully use a range of methods to discourage disruptive behaviour, keep questioning behaviour to get students accustomed to discipline, and avoid overreaction. Suitable reprimands such as negative reinforcement, making trouble-makers lose privileges, and isolating, separating or even detaining students are good ways of punishment. Other staff and parents could be involved if students continue to disrupt classroom teaching, but teachers must act instantly and avoid whole class punishment (Shawer, 2006, p. 23). Teachers can also use positive recognition to reward those who stick to the rules and a punitive system to punish those who violate them (Victor, 2005, p. 19).

### **2.3 Class size and Seating arrangement**

The class size is a very important factor of classroom management as more students always bring more responsibility and diverse requirements. The class size usually varies with the standard of the respective educational institution and the level of the academic syllabus.

About the seating arrangement classroom management experts and experienced educators say the decisions teachers make about whether students will be allowed to select their own seats and about the



physical arrangement of the classroom can have an impact on classroom discipline and the effectiveness of instruction.

The term 'large class,' generally sets up negative connotations of undesirable consequences and problems. The difficulties a teacher conducting a large class face are almost the same around the world. The challenges regarding a large class listed by the teachers all around the world in different workshops usually revolve around the issues, control of behaviour, noise, assessment and feedback, individual attention, mixed abilities, and use of the mother tongue (Stern, 1992, p. 15).

In the book *Developments in English for Specific Purpose*, the authors Evans and John (1998) introduced four 'I's concerning the management of large classrooms. The essence behind most of these approaches seems to be the four 'I's: involvement, interaction, Individualisation and independence with a modified teacher role as manager rather than a controller. Involvement can actually reduce the noise level instead of increasing it, as the buzz of active interaction is different to that of noisy boredom. Individualization is not one-to-one attention but allowing each person to be an individual and work to contribute in their own way. Independence means the teacher's approval or encouragement to students' self learning rather than controlling them.

The four 'I's are one-way of sharing responsibility within the class. The load on teachers is dramatically reduced when they see themselves as responsible only for answering what the class, as a whole cannot solve.

Organisation of the class and seating arrangement of class are big concerns of classroom management. The seating arrangement depends on the size of the class, the number of students, the type of desired activities and the available resources including the furniture. To make the class effective and to involve each and every student in the assigned work, the ideal style is to have the students sit in 'round desk café style'. But this style depends on the portability of the furniture. Whatever the seating arrangement is it should be made sure that all the members of a group can see each other's face. If the group is small then



the members of the group should be in an interacting distance so that they do not need to move or make extra noise to interact.

According to Fisher (1980) students 'Pay attention more when the teacher spends time discussing the goals or structures of the lesson and/or giving directions about what the students are to do,' (p.26). At the beginning and end of my class I pay more attention on discussing the goals or objectives of the class, so that they get an idea over the topic to be covered at the beginning. It should be made sure that the objective of my class is clear to the students from the beginning. Writing down the objective of the class on the board before asking the students to discuss their idea on the topic among themselves is beneficial for both the teacher and the student as it helps in icebreaking.

The author of the book *Language Teaching Matrix*, Richards, Jack C. (1990) - talked about the concept of task regarding effective teaching. He stated that studies have found that the more time students spend studying the content, the better they learn.

Since I had to conduct large classes most of the time, I tried to keep my students engaged with different tasks and discovered it as a very effective way of controlling a class. As Richards said that good teaching is said to be the task oriented. Effective teachers monitor performance on tasks, providing feedback on how well tasks have been completed. So, it can be said that an effective teaching and learning process can be conducted through tasks assigning and feedback given over that. It also creates a good teaching and learning environment.

However, the subject of classroom management carries with it many diverse issues. As teachers one has the responsibility to maintain an environment that is conducive to learning. A teacher must project positive attitudes towards situations that might otherwise be obstacles. Palumbo & Sanacore (2007) state that "No prescription or cure-all exists that will guarantee success in the classroom"(p.70). However, through mentoring, early training, knowledge of both rights as a teacher and the rights of the students,



and a positive reflective outlook, a beginning teacher may be able to subtract some of the initial frustrations and difficulties out of their initial stages.



### **Chapter 3**

#### **My Experience**

I learnt a lot of teaching techniques and theories of teaching during my four year graduation but found none of those are completely applicable in a classroom while teaching. I rather had to apply different theories partially according to the demand of situation. Most of the time, I had to come up with unique ideas in order to grab and retain students' attention. Here I would like to share my experience of teaching and the techniques I applied to manage the classes.

I taught English language in an English medium school named Cherry Blossoms International School from May 19 to August 18, 2011 as an intern teacher.

Though the school is not very famous in this city but they are very sincere to provide the best teaching and learning facilities to their moderate number of students.

I taught General Reading (a reading skill enhancing class) in the standard VI and Translation Studies in standard IX. I assisted an English teacher Samina Haque in some other classes as well. Some times I also had to go in the other classes as a replacement if any teacher is absent but I did not need to teach anything special on those classes. I used to discuss some non specific language items there.

During those three months of my teaching I found the classroom management as the most challenging part though the other areas of teaching did not seem very easy to me.

In this tenure I discovered that the lower grade students are noisier than their senior fellows whereas the upper grade students are shy to study. I invented some games to teach in a recreational way which borrow some features of 'Participatory Approach', 'Task based Approach' and 'Total Physical Response' but in fact follow none of those.



**a. Sit and Stand Game:** I found this game incredibly effective to grab the attention of the lower grade students especially in standard one and two where I actually applied the technique. I do not think it will work in the upper levels and thus I did not try it there.

In this game I ask the students to concentrate on my hand which I put upward and down in turn. When I throw my hands up all the students stand up immediately and when I bring the hand down instantly they sit. If any student fails to follow the hand he or she will be asked a question from the relevant chapter they were studying in that class and if he/she fails to answer that question as well then the student will be out of the game. Who remains till the last in this way is adjudged the champion. The result of this game is really very satisfying since at home the students study the chapters they were supposed to read in the next class in order to be the champion at any cost.

**b. The Statue and Move Game:** This game is almost like the Sit and Stand one but the different part of this game is the students freeze when they are asked to and move when they are asked to be relaxed otherwise the procedure is same and it is also more effective to the younger students.

**c. The Bottle Spinning Game:** I got the idea from a game the students of standard nine were playing once. When I entered the class on that day I saw they are playing the game and they requested me with a very urging voice that they do not want to study anymore as they already have attended two Class Tests. I immediately made a plan and said, 'well you don't have to study and let's continue the game you were playing but it will be in a different way. We will spin the bottle that you were doing but the bottle-mouth pointed person will translate a sentence from the text book,' (it was a class for translation studies as I mentioned earlier). The students like the game.

**d. The Story Bait:** I sometimes lure the students by good interesting stories to motivate them towards studies when they are not in a mode to co-operate. I tell them if you do the task I am giving you then I will tell you a story. Sooner you finish it sooner you get the story. It also works as the stories are usually charming.



e. **Quiz Game:** I used to divide the students into two different groups most of the times the girls and the boys. Then ask them to read a particular passage from the text and say I will ask you questions from this and mark. Each right answer gets 2 while the wrong answer gets nothing. They study hard in this case because they (I wonder why) really hate their opposite gender and never want to lose to them.

### 3.1 Feedbacks

Feedback is a very important part of the teaching process and thus I try to make it colorful so that they become more interested in using the language. The students are usually afraid of volunteering during the practice of the language items they learnt because they think they might be laughed at or the teacher may scold them if they make any mistake. Therefore I strictly handle the situation so that nobody laughs and encourage them to practice. But a balance is very crucial here which one I will encourage and which one I will correct because if I encourage a mistake then they might repeat it and if I deject they might feel feared to participate. So I encourage the participation and correct them with care. I sometimes talk to them personally calling them closer. I usually do that in case of checking any writing script. I do draw smileys and encouraging quotes like 'good work, carry on' or 'nice try but check out the spellings from now on,' in their writing pieces.

And when they speak I usually correct them instantly repeating with correct form or pronunciation (echo correction). But I do not correct them in each and every mistake they make since it may discourage them to participate so I usually concentrate on a particular mistake (like tense) in a class.



Since errors by the students came into the discussion so feedback automatically comes. I do not always correct the students and do not always interfere in every occasion they make mistakes. I give them instant feedback but I concentrate on particular types of errors and when find one is solved then I switch to the other. I do that because if I interfere too much then the students should start avoiding me and will be afraid of talking to me. Their affective filters will become stronger. When I check the scripts, then I mark each and every mistake they make and elaborate the whole thing why it is wrong. Moreover I talk to them personally to explain the errors but this is a very sensitive area of teaching since over correction may discourage the students so I discuss the thing in a very soft and friendly tone and do not forget to mention that every people on earth make mistake. I also remark that I am not an exception and make mistakes.

### 3.2 Some Observations

Till now I explained what I had to teach but in this part I will talk about what I saw when I did not teach. I take only two classes a day and work as a teaching assistant in four others so I get more time to observe.

During my tenure of internship, I found some interesting things:

- a. Each and every student of the school maintains a diary which scares a diary which scares them a lot. They always carry the diary with them and if they commit any severe offense then the teacher write that on that diary. Or if any teacher finds something important to be discussed with the respective student's parents then he/she write it on the diary and signs under it. A meeting between students' guardians and teachers named 'Parents teacher meeting' takes place every month where the diary is usually opened and so the students hate the diary very much.



- b. The students do not interact the same way with all the teachers. They love some whereas they avoid, hate or disturb some teachers. Usually they listen to their loved ones more and want them in classes more. As I mentioned earlier in the previous chapter, 'Positive student-teacher relationships improve students' affective and cognitive development, increase motivation, and minimize anticipated negative behaviors (Bradley, Pauley & Pauley, 2005). I always tried to become friendly with the students and used to play games with them in the leisure. I always tried to make my lesson easier and wanted to deliver those in an interesting way as I mentioned and got the result of it. The students liked me a lot since my teaching style seemed different to them and they used to make a cheering sound whenever I entered a class especially if I entered a class as a replacement teacher.
- c. The lower grade students are noisier than their senior fellows but the seniors do give more importance to their own wish. They want to do whatever they want and want the teacher to work according to them. But they do understand that the teacher might give them a bad grade at the end which they do not want and thus they listen to the teacher.
- d. Usually the lower level students are better in their native language. It might be because they talk more with their parents or house servants whereas the seniors spend more time with their classmates in academic situation since they have their coaching after the school.
- e. The students sometimes express their desires to their teacher through their writing in the free writing classes. Once a student wrote 'I love to listen to stories but nobody tells me one.' The student wrote that because he heard that I tell stories in other classes.



### 3.3 The Beginning of a Class

The beginning of a class is very important because as I already mentioned I was usually received by the students with a huge cheer and it was tough to calm down the class once it gets noisy. So I usually wore a serious face at the beginning so that the students also feel an urge to be serious. It helped me to introduce the potential task to them. Once the task is introduced to them the next part of the class progresses smoothly. As I already mentioned in the literature review that. "Good class managers start firm and get relaxed later. Good classroom managers also defuse confrontations, keep calm, take the heat out of the situation, do not argue with students, and use students' names, humour, and constructive criticism."

### 3.4 Error Analysis

I found that the types of errors the students mostly make are the errors caused by overgeneralization and caused by the influence of the first language.

For example, one student wrote 'There were a lot of childrens playing around.' Here he used the term 'childrens' to pluralize the term child. It is an overgeneralization because he thought 's' or 'es' is always used to make something plural since this is right in most of the cases.

For an example of the errors made by the influence of the first language I will mention the 'I read in standard .....' case. Whenever I ask any student in which standard he or she is in, they answer, 'I read in standard .....' most of the time. Once I made the same answer when I was in school. But my teacher then asked me 'Do you only read in school? Do not you write or do any projects?' The reply by my teacher made the mistake clear to me. The answer should be 'I study in standard ...' or 'I am in standard ...' This is an error caused by the influence of our first language. The students think in their native language and then they translate that into the target language when they talk. This is what causes the error. In Bangla (the first language of my students) it is said that 'ami ... srenite pori' which is the literal translation of the answer they usually use.



## **Chapter 4**

### **Conclusion**

So in conclusion it can be said that classroom management is not only controlling students' disruptive behaviours and maintaining discipline, it also entails the other factors that establish a productive working environment. Classroom management, one of the most important parts of language teaching covers each and every movement of each and every elements of class including the teacher, students and the resources. Classroom management is in fact the whole process of delivering the lesson. A language teacher should consider the students' interest since the best way of learning a language is to use it and the best way to make the students use the language is working with their favorite field. Feedback is also an important issue in this case as inappropriate feedback may make students less interested in using the language.



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